

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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Have We Met Before?

Artists: Eleanor Antin | Chris Burden | Lynda Benglis | Heather Cassils | Keith Cottingham | Marcel Duchamp | Yishay Garbasz | Detlef Henrichs | Christopher Makos | Man Ray | Andy Warhol | Hannah Wilke | Gil Yefman | Rona Yefman

February 18 – April 28, 2012

Have We Met Before? Ronald Feldman Gallery brings together several generations of artists working in sculpture, video, photography, and mixed-media who explore the complex connection between body and self-identity.

Several of the fourteen artists directly alter their bodies to address issues of gender. In her work *Becoming* (2008-2010), **Yishay Garbasz** chronicles the changes in her body before and after “gender clarification surgery.” In *Eat Me Damien* (2010), Garbasz displays her formaldehyde protected testicles removed during surgery. A video and photographs from Garbasz’s *The Number Project* (2011) reveal the artist using branding irons to sear her mother’s tattooed Auschwitz identification number into her own arm, thereby passing a fading memory from mother to daughter. In *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture* (1972), **Eleanor Antin** photographed her body from four vantage points every morning for 37 days while on a restrictive diet to address societal pressures and question standards of beauty. Artist, stunt person, and body builder, **Heather Cassils**, in her works *Fast Twitch / Slow Twitch* (2011), *Advertising: Homage to Benglis* (2011, collaboration with Robin Black), and *Body Composition* (2011), makes evident the extreme efforts necessary to achieve her exaggerated muscular physique which she uses to “interrogate systems of power, control and gender.”

Other artists use drag and ambiguity to confront the rigidity of society’s concepts of gender. **Man Ray’s** photograph of **Marcel Duchamp’s** alter ego Rose Sélavy proclaims “such is life” (1921). Duchamp’s catalytic *Nude Descending a Staircase, No.2* (1912) further blurs ambiguous gender. Photographs by **Christopher Makos** include *Altered Image* in which **Andy Warhol**, inspired by Duchamp, role-plays in drag. **Lynda Benglis** challenges the male ethos in an Artforum advertisement (Paula Cooper Gallery, 1974) in which she boldly holds a dildo to her naked body, thus embodying both sexes.

Photos and videos from **Rona Yefman’s** series *Marth A Bouke* intimately portrays Tel Aviv based Martha Bouke, an 80 year old holocaust survivor and grandfather, who has earnestly adopted, mentally and physically, a female persona. Martha, who wears a plastic mask and blond wig, challenges traditional notions of eroticism and familial structures, age expectations, and gender norms. Her series *My Brother and I* (1996 – 2009) captures the complexity of adolescence and self-realization, documenting her relationship with her younger brother, **Gil Yefman**, who transitions from man to woman, and thereafter back to a man. **Gil Yefman’s** hanging knit sculpture *Blood Moon* (2010), conceptualized while reading Rainer Maria Rilke’s “Letters to a Young Poet,” parallels the possibility and nature of male menstruation and birthing through the creation of an artwork, with the fullness of the female period and birthing. His knit sculpture *Breakfast Hat* (2007) addresses contemporary overabundance.

Other works are a response to involuntary physical changes that have greatly altered lives or nature. In his series *Narben*, **Detlef Henrichs**, left catastrophically burned after a paint and gas explosion in 1971 at the age of 10, captures the psychological and physical impact endured by burn survivors. Paralleling these portraits are photographs taken from German National Parks depicting the results of dieback, the gradual disfiguration and death of trees caused by acid rain and other environmental factors. Photos from **Chris Burden’s** *Dreamy Nights*, performed in Graz, Austria (1974), show the artist writhing on the floor as burning Spiritus, representing destructive Medieval weapons, overflows onto his body. *INTRA-VENUS* (1992-93), **Hannah Wilke’s** last work, records the realities of her physical transformation while battling Lymphoma. In addition to photographs, works include *Brushstroke* (1992), composed of hair lost during radiation and chemo treatment, and *Why Not Sneeze* (1992), a bird cage, stuffed with Wilke’s plastic prescription bottles, a reference to Duchamp’s *Why Not Sneeze, Rrose Sélavy?* (1921). **Keith Cottingham’s** constructed photograph *Fictitious Portrait* (1993) eerily insinuates the nurturing of a superior race.

There will be an opening reception February 18: 6 - 8. Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday, 10 - 6, Monday by appointment. For more information, contact Sarah Paulson (212) 226-3232 or sarah@feldmangallery.com.

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